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ABSTRACT

The concept of emotional competence entails resilience, self-efficacy, and acting in accord with one's sense of moral character. This suggests argues that emotional competence is demonstrated by the self-efficacy in emotion-eliciting encounters and identifies eight key emotional skills that support its acquisition in interpersonal contexts. The eight emotional skills are: (1) awareness of one's emotional state; (2) ability to discern others' emotions; (3) ability to use the vocabulary of emotion and expression commonly available in one's culture; (4) capacity for empathic and sympathetic involvement in others' emotional experiences; (5) ability to realize that inner emotional states need not correspond to outer expression; (6) capacity for adaptive coping with aversive or distressing emotions by using self-regulatory strategies; (7) awareness that the structure or nature of relationships is in large part defined by how emotions are communicated within the relationship; and (8) capacity for emotional self-efficacy. Focusing on children 5 to 14 years of age, the book addresses each skill in a separate chapter, integrating theory, empirical data, and case examples. The book also emphasizes the cultural and gender context of emotional experience, and the significance of moral disposition and personal integrity for mature emotional competence. Links between emotional competence, socialization, and resilience in the face of stress are also explored. The book's concluding chapter deals with emotional dysfunction and addresses why children fail to develop specific emotional skills. Contains approximately 650 references. (KB)

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